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An Epistle to the Society of Friends.

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AN EPISCLE

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS,

OR THE

YEARLY MEETING OF PHILADELPHIA,

AND ELSEWHERE.

PHILADELPHIA.

Printed by John Richards, No. 122 North Third St.

1834.

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AN EPISTLE, &c.

“God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” This manifestation and offspring of God in man, is that alone in every soul which can enable it availingly to cry “Abba, Father;” growing up with spiritual senses and daily exercise of its heavenly powers, we come not only to love the Father, but, in the expansion of his own unlimited nature, to love all those who are begotten of him, whether to us outwardly known, or through a more spiritual and universal intercourse as unto the children of God every where we are drawn into communion with them.

In a season of bodily indisposition and distress, with which it has pleased God to visit this outward tabernacle, my mind has been drawn forth to visit the churches of Christ in various places, and having attained to a little strength, feel most easy to address a few words of salutation and encouragement, and, should it arise, of tender counsel and caution, to my brethren and sisters in outward religious fellowship; having been long in best feeling united to many of them, and having in spirit visited others, whose outward visages I have not beheld, but in a more hidden fellowship have been brought to sit with both in their desolate apartments, covered with mourning because of Zion’s desolation, and also in heavenly places in Christ, where the children of the resurrection are at times permitted to sit with him in glory. A participation of a measure of which glory is, in those solemnly instructive seasons, bestowed on us, as evidence of an invisible world, where an inheritance

undefiled, and that fadeth not away, is in reserve for all the pure in heart. Seeing therefore, dearly beloved brethren and sisters, that those glorious rewards are believed to await the righteous, and the righteous only, how deep and weighty are the considerations which involve this short life of probation! If such the accountabilities of a human mind as constituted by its Divine Author, even under the benighting influence of ignorance, superstition, and bigotry, in which divers nations of the earth are yet found, and the over-spreading of those thick clouds of prejudice and tradition, which still clothe a large portion of the more enlightened part of mankind, how much more, of a people from whose minds God hath rent those vails, and shined in upon them with the clear light of a gospel day; wherein the ordinations of a spiritual dispensation, standing in the wisdom, power, and nature of God, and perfectly adapted to the most exalted state of his creature man, are clearly distinguished from those dispensations and administrations of his divine government, which, having been given to ages that are past, as they could bear, have but little more than pointed, through the various representations, figures, and analogies of things, to the one eternal substance; and therefore he raised up a people and gave them a testimony to the latter, that the shadows of the former may pass away, that an increase of light from the one Heavenly Luminary may shine upon the souls of his children.

Here we see the Society of Friends, as to light, knowledge, and profession, with their standard raised on the height of the mountains of Israel, that all tribes and nations may behold it, and beholding, gather thereto. Brethren and sisters of the different stations and relations in this society, who have been made alive by, and are alive in the truth, shall we suffer this standard to fall, while God is known as our captain and our king, while his all pervading victorious spirit is round about our camp, and offers to go forth with our armies? Shall fear or dismay oppose our

advancement,—shall feebleness of hands cause to let go the sword, the shield, and the standard ? Shall doubtful disputations, the bewildering mazes of the reasonings of man, be suffered to intercept the light of life, and draw our attention from the great object of its manifestations unto, and holy inspirations upon, our souls ? Shall the benumbing fetters of sordid earthly mindedness enchain our feet in the dark uncomfortable regions of a covetous mind, coveting after the means of its own enthralment, and seeking with all the powers of a weak, benighted, wandering spirit, to lade itself with thick clay ? Shall the gay enchantments of a fleeting flattering world of sense, with its bonds and friendships, still at enmity with God and the soul, with whatever glory its kingdoms and principalities may present to our minds, be suffered to gain the ascendancy there, and induce us to forego the fulfilment of those duties, contained in the condition of our enlistment, as soldiers of Christ, and rob us of the prize at last ? Or shall we arise, under the renewed quickenings and qualifications of his holy Spirit, and encourage each other to hold out in the warfare, nor suffer the standard, which has been raised before the nations, to fall vilely and mournfully to the ground.

The attendance of our religious meetings, as a religious and reasonable duty, has from the first rise of this society been a subject of feeling concern to the spiritually minded, and particularly to such as have had the oversight of the flock of Christ. We have cause to admire the wisdom and to adore the goodness of God, in dispensing to the church, in the various ages of mankind, such an order as he could bless to every member thereof. We believe the advantages resulting from meeting together, for the purpose of social and divine worship, stand among the first blessings of such an order, and are still owned by the Head of the church as perfectly agreeable with, and adapted to spiritual dispensation and religion of the heart, embracing the highest privileges which the Father of spirits has seen meet to confer

on his children while here,—that of an immediate and sensible communion with him. If such the high origin of, and inestimable blessing contained in this institution of Heaven's order and will, and still made known in the ownings of his presence among us, when thus gathered in body and in spirit before him, why should any forego those sublime enjoyments? Why not fulfil those divine requisitions, which, for our good alone, he calls on us to attend unto; as our goodness reacheth not unto him, as adding to eternal perfections or consummate happiness and glory? But why expatiate on the subject of this duty, seeing we all, or nearly all, agree in the theory it involves; why not rather inquire the cause of the neglect thereof in practice? The intermediate causes of this latter deficiency we shall doubtless find to be various, growing out of one deeply mournful cause, a want of love to God, and consequent disregard to some of the most solemn and important of our religious duties.

“Hear O Israel, the Lord thy God is one Lord: and thou shall love the Lord thy God with all thine heart.” Did we rightly observe this important commandment, no neglect of the attendance of our religious meetings would be named among us; sublunary interests and considerations would become subservient to those of a higher nature, and God would be worshipped in spirit and in truth, and in that outward order which he in his perfect wisdom and goodness has instituted for us, and calleth on us to maintain.

The merchant would leave his shop, at the risk of some small commercial disadvantages, and the husbandman his field of labour, with faith and reliance on God, that he would prosper the enterprize of the one, and bless the labour of the other, as far as is necessary in affording that small pittance of temporal support, to a temporal and soon perishing body, which that body requires. But, alas, the love of gain for the purpose of sordid accumulation, or for pride and vain glory, has been suffered to overcome those better principles of the inspiring power of God in our souls,

and to number us with the idol worshippers of all ages; for idolatry is the same at all times, and consisteth in a departure from God and his worship, and a cleaving unto and preferring his gifts before him. Nor will children and servants be forgotten, or excluded the solemn feasts of Zion, by such as love the Lord and their neighbour as they ought, such as prefer the interests of their own immortal souls to the groveling considerations of earthly accumulations, ease, or aggrandizement. But some will ask, why attend meetings, and what is gained by such attendance ever so duly performed from year to year? Why very little indeed, except by the spiritual worshipper;—and why not go a little further and ask, why make a profession at all of religion and worship? It is true, mournfully true, that many are punctual observers of almost every iota of outward religious obligation, and at the same time appear too much unacquainted with the work of regeneration of heart; whose spirits are not found in the field of holy exercise and warfare, and although they have obtained a name to live, not being faithfully concerned to labour for themselves, they have “pined away with famine, stricken through for want of the fruits of the field,” and are numbered with the dead. Do not the calls of the Spirit go forth over many of our religious assemblies, as formerly addressed to a state of ease and insensibility—“Awake thou that sleepest; arise from the dead, and Christ will give thee light?”—But how shall we arise, if we are found not only dead, but so deeply buried in the earth as not to hear these calls? My spirit travails under feelings of deep and lively interest for the arising of these. “Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thy heritage to reproach;” breathe on with thy spirit, and raise up by thy resurrection power a band of militants in thy name, who shall again nobly raise the standard of thy truth, and valiantly fight thy battles to the overcoming of the enemies of thy church; that peace, truth, simplicity, and fervent love may prevail throughout the borders of thy Zion.

No one of our christian testimonies appears at this time of more importance, than the right attendance of our religious meetings;—it seems somewhat like the vitals of the constitution of our outward order, and so long as this part remains greatly defective, the body will continue to decline. Will those around us, on observing the small number who present themselves at our mid-week meetings, especially in our cities and neighbourhoods of much wealth, where more than a competence has been already gathered, believe that we are indeed a people fearing God and hating covetousness? or shall we not rather be viewed, because of this open violation of an acknowledged important testimony, as disregarding God and coveting this world?

Ah! my brethren and sisters, members of the Society of Friends, professing the same religion and worship, and bound together in its sacred obligations! whatever may be our hopes or prospects, it is very clear that we can never prosper as a people, until this part of our christian discipline be more diligently attended to; until our meeting houses become places of resort for the society generally, on all our meeting days; not only those set up for the special purpose of divine worship, but such as are more particularly held for the administration of the discipline of the church. It having been my lot to attend a considerable number of these, in different parts of our society, my spirit has often been burthened with the formal lifeless manner in which these meetings have been held, and the discipline administered; having had painfully to observe the prevalence of that spirit which influenced Ahab to go up to Ramoth Gilcad, and fall there—the spirit of man's wisdom presuming to enter into the work and counsel of God, and speak in his name. This has not only occasioned the fall of kings, but the declension and apostacy of churches. Every movement made or attempted in the church of Christ, under the influence of any other spirit than his, is the work of antichrist and tends to confusion of language. No Friend,

acquainted with our principles, and concerned to live up to them, can feel at liberty to speak to any matter in our religious meetings, without first feeling after the mind of Truth therein, as little deviations from this only right criterion readily and almost imperceptibly introduce into greater, and the savor of life becomes lost in that mind, and the savor of the death of the letter coming in, and exercising itself, spreads its leavening influence over meetings, greatly oppressing the leaven and life of the kingdom in them. And when, from the motion of Truth in the minds of some of the little ones, a few expressions are uttered in the foolishness of the cross, the worldly wise part in some active member whose time is always ready, arises and casts a stone, or something comparatively hard, whereby the innocent are wounded and the work marred. Why this stumbling of the oxen—this stretching forth an unqualified hand to the ark, seeing God is as able and willing to clothe with his own wisdom and strength, as he was in the days of the former prophets and of our forefathers, when his own living presence was known among them to be the life and power of their religious assemblies; by which the forward creaturely part was kept down and truth raised into dominion, the honest hearted were encouraged to occupy their respective gifts in the church, the mourners were comforted, the weak strengthened, food convenient was given to the children, and every state and condition ministered unto, and a precious growth in the truth was witnessed in the different branches of the family.

Ah, Friends! were we all as faithful as they, were we sufficiently concerned to stand separate from the world, and every arising of a worldly spirit, in meetings and out of them, how would our minds become clothed with the wisdom of truth; how solemn our religious meetings, and how livingly would truth arise, and through us exalt its own testimonies. God would be honoured, and his church edified; Zion's borders would be enlarged, and her children estab-

lished in righteousness; her messengers would go forth to "Phut and Lud, and to the Isles that are afar off, and strength of salvation would be their clothing." And as we believe an outward or vocal ministry has been, in ages that are past, made use of as an instrumental means of an inward gathering to the heavenly Shiloh, and that such a ministry has been opened among us, through such as having themselves submitted to the purifying baptism of the holy Spirit, and therein becoming acquainted with the paths of regeneration, are enabled to point them out to those the feet of whose minds have not been effectually turned thereunto, and to encourage such to a further progress who having taken some steps therein, are ready to turn back again into Egypt, or to stumble, because of some of the (reported) hard sayings of Christ in the way of the doctrine of his cross, to that part which cannot inherit the kingdom of God. How desirable, my dear friends, how needful for such as are called on to speak in the name of the Lord, in declaring his way to others, so to abide in him as to be able, after the pattern set up by the holy Jesus, in the simple persuasive language of truth, to speak unto others concerning the heavenly kingdom as of things known and handled of the word of life. And as a very conspicuous part of the work of the faithful in this society, has been to declare against the doctrines and darkness of a false church and ministry, I have felt, at this solemn season of deep bodily affliction, an exercise lest this important testimony which we are still loudly called on to bear against spiritual Babylon and her traffic in the souls of men, should be suffered to fall too much to the ground in this society; seeing through the false doctrines of this church apostate, many are deceived and brought to believe in lies, and fix their hope of eternal salvation in that which cannot save.

Under this burden of false doctrine, deceit, and cruelty, the seed of God hath, in the different ages of mankind, been grievously oppressed. The deep mysterious workings and

wicked devices of this spirit, against the peace, order, present and future happiness of God's rational creation, have never been more clearly opened to the view of my mind than at this time; nor stronger desires felt that his creation may be redeemed and set free from the divinations, enchantments, and oppression of this kingdom and power of darkness. And I am given at this time to believe, that the living members of the body of Christ, especially in our society, will be led into a much deeper travail on this account than has of latter time been felt among us, and a close searching testimony go forth against the kingdom of the beast and the false prophet; the same now, under whatever clothing, as when its power was permitted to rule over the bodies of men, and shed the blood of saints.

In whatever point of view we survey the mission of a gospel minister, it is seen to be awfully responsible and important. May these consider their high and holy calling, lest through unwatchfulness and inattention to the great object of our mission and testimony, we gradually lose sight of that which can alone enable us to finish the same to our present and final peace, and to his glory who hath called us, and to whom all glory is due. While on this subject, my mind seems brought to contemplate the character and office of Jesus Christ as an elder brother and pattern, in that he assumed no higher character, as an outward testimony bearer, than that of a servant or minister, declaring both by example and precept that whosoever would be great in his church, must condescend, as he condescended, to be as the least and servant of all; nor was his meekness and humility greater or more conspicuous than was his faithful perseverance in the dignified cause in which he laboured. May we remember, that "he set us an example, that we should follow his steps."

I am verily persuaded there are, in the various departments of our society, those who are truly concerned to discharge the trust reposed in them, towards their younger

and their less concerned brethren, over whom the Holy Ghost has made them overseers. My spirit travails for the strength and renewed encouragement of these, that they may not suffer the low state of things with us as a society, nor their own weakness, however at times deeply felt, to overcome their faith in God--their patience and perseverance in his cause.

Dear friends, companions in tribulation--fellow laborers in the gospel of Christ,—however unsuccessful your labors may sometimes appear to be, they will not be forgotten or go for nought; a blessed and glorious reward still awaits the faithful, and the language of inspiration anciently uttered continues, and will be applied to every faithful companion of Christ; “Though Israel be not saved, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and my God shall be my strength.”

It is now with me to make some observations to parents and guardians of children.—On comparing the accountabilities of the different stations and appointments in the church of Christ, none perhaps will be found more responsible than that of parents and heads of families, under whose immediate care the minds of the rising generation receive their cultivation and growth; and it now presents to view, that a sense of the accountabilities of this station, will be found to increase with an increase of right engagement on their behalf. When parents are chiefly concerned to lay up treasures on earth for their children, their accountabilities seem to rise in their view but little higher than in things relating to their temporal good. But when these become truly concerned for their children's immortal welfare, when desires that they may have a treasure in heaven become paramount to every other consideration, it is then their accountabilities are seen to be truly awful and tender; they feel themselves as guardians of immortal minds, and are often brought to the consideration that their conduct toward them may possibly have an influence on their future

and eternal state. It is then the gay and pleasing prospects of their mere mortal felicities appear as bubbles on the water, and as the dust of the balance, in comparison of their eternal rest and enjoyment. It is then the deceitful friendships, and many other enticing allurements of this world's riches and greatness, appear as dangerous snares to their feet. The simplicity of the religion of Jesus Christ is clearly seen, emanating from its Divine Author, and appears in its own inestimable excellence and value. It is then the principles, doctrines, and testimonies of the christian religion, as believed and embraced by the enlightened and faithful of our society, are found to be precious, and an education in them of more value than all the pleasing decorations and refinements of a glittering world. Under these enlightened views and holy solicitudes of parental love and concern, the love of God and the discipline of the cross become the early guardians of our children; trained for heaven more than for earth, they grow up in the fear, nurture, and admonition of the Lord. And although some, however thus favoured, from the prevalence of example and contagion of a worldly spirit, (unto which in the present state and ordinary course of things, they must be more or less exposed,) are found imbibing principles and habits, calculated to mar their innocence and destroy their peace; yet parents are clear of their blood, and those early instructions derived from parental concern may yet be remembered, and gathered as bread cast on the waters, when, through some awakening visitation of Providence, such are brought home to reflect more wisely for themselves. Thus, dear parents and guardians of children, we see there are strong incentives to faithfulness; and since this is the best we can do, let none desert the important post of duty where Providence has placed them, since much may depend on a strict and watchful care therein maintained. No doubt much of the weakness and declension now prevalent in this society, is owing to a want of parental religious concern, early to im-

press the minds of their children with a sense and love of what is right, and a just abhorrence of evil, and, as their minds expand, and powers of perception are strengthening in them, to unfold to them, as they can bear, the great principles of the religion of Jesus Christ, and the alone means of redemption through him.

Parents would seldom lose sight of their solemn obligations concerning the spiritual welfare of their offspring, were the principles of immutable truth permitted sufficiently to rule in their own minds to the subjugation of those passions and propensities, which being of an earthly nature, never fail, if given way to, of enlisting the mind into the service of the god of this world, as subjects of his kingdom. Ah, dear parents, if such I am addressing, whose minds have become entralled with the bondages of a worldly spirit! if the powers and principles of a life that is eternal, which were offered to you in the morning of life, in order to your redemption, have not yet perfected that work, and become the guardian angels of your spirits, suffer your minds to be suitably affected by a solemn review of that portion of time which is past, and a consideration of the design and end of that being which God has given you, and see whether the responsibilities of a nature but little lower than the angels, are not calling you to higher aims and objects, than those on which your minds now chiefly dwell, and to the fulfilment of higher duties than those which involve terrestrial things? If so, may we be aroused while the day is yet ours, and the light of Christ is shining in upon us, quickening our minds to a living sense of his goodness and of our duty, and raising in us desires after immortality and eternal life. With this close in, and in this abide, and no good thing will be withheld. Renewed desires will be often awakened on behalf of the dear children, and qualification afforded to instruct them in whatever pertains to their essential good. The God of peace will be near to bless you and your offspring together; not unfrequently in-

fluencing your minds to call them about you, teaching them by example the impressive lesson of silence, and waiting upon the Lord. And should that God that loves you and loves your children, and knows how to apply the first lessons of heavenly instruction to their minds, find in his boundless treasury a blessing to dispense through you, how would he open your minds in the pure counsel of truth. Their states would be seen and felt, and you would know that you loved them as children of the Heavenly Father. An intercourse would be opened between your spirits and theirs, in that endearing feeling and tender relationship, which binds together the church and family in heaven and on earth. Friendships thus formed between parents and children, would not easily be dissolved or shaken; an access would be opened to their minds, by which they would be won to Christ, and grow up living members of his body, and in the course of their future years and stations, would be found transmitting the same blessings to future generations. So would Zion's borders be enlarged and God be glorified.

And now, dear young friends, children and youth of this society, heirs of the same hope and heavenly calling with one who now addresses you,—my spirit turns toward you in the abounding of gospel love, in tender desires for your present, but much more your final well-being; and in taking a view of earth's innumerable multitudes, more especially the nations and denominations of professing christians, the great declension of these from that life, power, and favour with God, which has, through the renewed visitations of his holy Spirit, been at different periods of time, dispensed to the militant church, the emphatic query, proposed by Jesus to his immediate followers, is brought to my remembrance: “Will ye also go away?” Ah, my beloved young friends! this is a very important and comprehensive query. It considers you as free agents (under God,) to whom are preferred the offers of eternal life, and leaves you to make your election. It considers you as able, through

his grace, to make a right choice; to choose the good and live, or to refuse it and die;—die to those refined sensibilities of soul, only known to the redeemed and ransomed of the Lord. It brings before you the awful consequences of choosing death and darkness for your portion, rather than light and life. Finally, it involves your present and future destiny, and leaves you to decide the same in the answer which your lives shall give.

The reply of one of the disciples, on behalf of himself and his fellows, is brought to my view, as containing another query worthy of your deepest consideration: “To whom shall we go?” His mind was, no doubt, at that time illuminated and expanded by heavenly light and love, in which he was enabled to take a summary and extensive view of human things. He saw their evanescence and emptiness. The balance of the sanctuary was at hand, by which he estimated their weight and value, and behold, they were ~~an~~ vanity and nothing, in comparison of that treasure which was now set before him as the object of his affections, pursuit, and decided choice, and therefore was enabled to say, from what he then experienced, and no doubt in the demonstration of the spirit and with power, to the reaching of the witness in the minds of his companions around him, “Thou hast the words of eternal life.” Yes, my dear young friends, in him, Christ, the “wisdom and power of God,” are included the principles and powers of the soul’s present and eternal felicity, which we are encouraged to believe, if ~~we~~ faithful, we may become clothed with. “And ye are complete in him who is the head of all principality and power,” remains to be the declaration of the spirit to the churches, known only in a subjection of the creaturely powers to those that are divine. Thus putting on Christ, we become “accepted in the beloved,” clothed with his pure spirit, the “white robe” of a perfectly innocent and righteous life, having obtained the palm of victory through him, over all the powers and passions of an earthly nature. Ah! my dear young

friends, these conquests over every discordant feeling, trial, and temptation of time, and succeeding crowns of eternal enjoyment, are the great objects proposed in the offers of his redeeming love to our souls. Are these the objects of your pursuit, the subject of your daily thoughts and desires? Then will the presence of the God of the whole earth be the light of your path, while passing through time, and at its solemn approaching close, safely conduct your redeemed spirits to the heavenly mansions.

But while addressing the Zionward travellers, the language of mourning has saluted my ears, on account of another class of the rising generation, who have not yet chosen the paths of regeneration, which under the cross are beheld by the divinely enlightened eye, to lead directly forward to the kingdom of God, but are travelling in those ways which are pleasant to the eye of sense, and terminate in a dark cloud which rises beyond the vale of time; who have not yet learned by sad and late experience, that "all is vanity and vexation of spirit," that stands not in that wisdom which is from above, and is not quickened by that life which lives forever, but in that wisdom which is from below, and in that life which is mortal and transitory, and can therefore yield no permanent enjoyment to a being whose principal and higher nature finds not its heaven here. But there are some who believe not. Such are the deceptive powers of darkness, (or sense,) when once admitted to take possession of the soul, that they not only destroy its relish for divine things, but lead to doubt the reality of them. To such the prophet was directed to cry out in this language: "Behold ye despisers, and wonder and perish: for I will work a work in your days, which ye will not believe, though it were told you." For, however the disobedient may call in question the necessity of the great work of the soul's salvation through the immediate influence and operation of God's holy spirit upon it, or however these, through unbelief and hardness of heart, reject the evidences of the reli-

gion of Jesus Christ, which God hath made sufficiently clear to all who are willing to receive them, and therein reject the only means of the redemption of their own souls; still his work goes on in their days, although they believe it not when told them, by such as receiving him in the way of his coming, have obtained power to become the sons and daughters of God, and are not ashamed to acknowledge the relationship "before men." The unbelief of those will no more hinder the work in others, than the awful neglect of the five "foolish virgins" to have their lamps supplied with oil, while yet attainable, could hinder the admission of the wise into the bridegroom's chamber. An ancient writer, in depicting the situation of unbelieving impenitent souls, in a state of future existence, lamenting over their own past follies and misjudgings of the righteous of their time, bespeaks them in this language: "We fools accounted their lives madness, and their end to be without honour: how are they numbered among the children of God, and their lot is among the saints."

I seem now permitted to turn my mind from this land of darkness, these bewildering shades of unbelief, where dark unholy spirits dwell; but not without desires that such, while yet in time, may hear availingly his call, who to the prison house went down to preach glad tidings to imprisoned souls. And lo, he condescends to visit still the dark and strong domains of unbelief, nor would he fail to set the prisoners free, were they but willing to embrace the means of their redemption. "Hear and thy soul shall live," was once the voice of truth, and such remains to be; but still that voice and small, and man's tumultuous passions must be still, before he can distinctly hear the sound; false reasonings must be hushed and quietude prevail; then will the living cogent voice of truth arise, to meet thine inward ear, that thou mayest hear and live. Seek then the closet, love retirement's hour, while divine admonitions await the perceptions of thy mind, and the evidences of truth are offered

to thy understanding, and its too stifled convictions are still visiting thy soul; lest thou be numbered with a too long gainsaying people formerly, and fall after the same example of unbelief, while yet in the wilderness of thine own unsubdued passions, where thy travel has hitherto been; lest his holy spirit be withdrawn, who has declared that it shall not always strive with man, seeing he also is flesh, and must return to the dust whence he was taken, and the spirit to its state of final reward. Ah, then, be wise in time, seeing the awakening dispensations of Providence are often visiting our outward dwellings, and proclaiming in accents still and solemn, "Be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh."

While about to leave this subject, "the sound of the trumpet grows louder and louder;" every feeling emotion in my soul is moved, every tender sensibility awakened, under the consideration of the awfulness of falling into the hands of a living offended God for final judgment! "How shall I give thee up, O Ephraim! how shall I set thee as Admah, how shall I make thee as Zeboim!"—cities which, rejecting the day of their visitation, God overthrew in a moment, and "no hands stayed on them." O my beloved young friends! if such there are within the pale of this Society, who, like the children of Zeboim, under a profession of morality and refinement are nevertheless subjects of their own passions and appetites, with whom pride and the bread of idleness abounds, may the late and solemn admonition, proposed to a certain king in a few words written upon the wall, be timely and deeply pondered, "Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin."

It now seems right to address another and more numerous class of our beloved young friends, who believe in Christ, love to hear his sayings, and do them not; who are often brought to see where they are, and also what they should be, but like unstable minds who have gone before them, beholding themselves as in a glass, straight-way

forget what manner of persons they are. In these seasons of forgetfulness and absence from the light, ah ! how unconscious are many of our dear children how they appear to others, when so easily and openly they go counter to a good profession, and their own best feelings, in order to imitate the trifling and the vain, in things which yield no permanent happiness to the mind, and which the voice of Truth, in the silent hour of reflection, continues to warn them against. The dissipated votaries of a life of licentiousness have been viewed by the good and wise of all ages, as sinking below the rational and allowable satisfactions of time, while the circles of high life and false refinement, have been beheld soaring above the real participation of those enjoyments for which they seem to aim. "Surely, men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie: to be laid in the balance, they are altogether lighter than vanity." Surely, nothing but a life of rectitude, the result of an enlightened understanding and obedient mind, will be found in the end worth pursuing or living for. The vulgar joys of sense, those idol gods of men of low degree, are lighter or worse than nothing, because they bring torment in the end; while the lives and appearances of this world's rich and great ones are often a lie, both to themselves and others, as being void of that felicity which they have promised themselves therein, and which they may appear to some to possess and enjoy. Where then "shall wisdom be found, and where is the place of understanding, seeing it is hid from the eyes of all living, and kept close from the fowls of the air?" True wisdom and understanding are still hid, and ever will be, from all who are living to themselves in the gratification of the natural mind, and kept close from every soaring imagination of the vain and aspiring. However high these may rise in the regions of sense, the way of understanding is not discovered, the paths of true wisdom are not found; human expectation and pursuit fail of their object, and they set down clothed with disappointment and

mourning. Lift up thine eyes, thou prodigal son or daughter, and look again toward thy Heavenly Father's house; open thine ear to discipline, and be still, and thou will hear a language from on high, containing the glad tidings of final success and salvation. "God knoweth where wisdom is, he beholdeth the place of understanding. He looketh to the ends of the earth, and seeth under the whole heaven." He knoweth the place of hidden and permanent treasures, and understandeth the paths which lead thereto, accompanied with an evidence of assurance, that if thou wilt now give up to follow him, and not thine own imagination, he will safely lead thee thither; he will make thy feet like hinds' feet, and set thee upon high places;—give thee wings as of an eagle, and lift up thy soul above terrestrial joys, to become an inhabitant of those pure regions, where fountains of living water will be opened to thy soul. Turn in hither, ye alienated prodigal children, while he that "seeketh and judgeth" still standeth and knocketh at the door of your hearts. "Behold, now is the accepted time: behold, now is the day of salvation." "Even to-day, while it is to-day, if ye hear his voice, harden not your hearts."

And ye tenderly visited, often covenanting, and yet unstayed minds! my soul is dipped into exercise and sympathy on your behalf, that you may be strengthened and encouraged to hold on your way toward Zion; and when favored to renew your covenants with the Lord, suffer none of the surrounding outward objects and temptations of time to draw you again from the only safe enclosure of his holy fear and presence. Watch continually, even unto prayer, that the feet of your minds slide not from that foundation, on which you have known at times of standing, and on which, through acts of dedication and devotedness, some of you have already begun to build. Here abide, and then, however storms of trial and affliction may arise, or floods of temptation assail you, he that was with Joseph in the pri-

son house, and with David in his distress, remains to be the Shepherd of Israel, and neither slumbers nor sleeps; but through every allotted dispensation will still be near, to remember and fulfil his promise to his followers,—“Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world,” if so be ye “receive not the grace of God in vain.”

My mind now seems drawn to address some weary travellers—mourners in Zion, who may at this time need a word of encouragement, being brought to feel the fulfilment of ancient prophecy, “he trod the wine press alone, and of the people there was none with him.” Ah, ye deeply tried, at times dismayed and almost overwhelmed souls: Israel’s Shepherd has not forgotten you, the curtain of his love is round about you still; he numbers every secret sigh and falling tear; he knows the way which you take, and when he hath sufficiently tried you, “will bring you forth as gold.” Therefore cast not away your confidence, in which is great recompense of reward; keeping in remembrance the declaration and promise of our ever present, compassionate Master, that “he that continueth unto the end, the same shall be saved.” For these, in due time, “the solitary places will be made glad; the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose; the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water.” Therefore “trust ye in the Lord forever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength.”

Feeling now clear of the several subjects impressing my mind you-ward, and being weak in body, I seem permitted to draw toward a close, under feelings that can salute, in the love of the gospel, every branch and member of the household of faith. And, my beloved friends, of all ages and classes in this society, may our walk be with God; may we love the place where his honor dwells, and in all our conversation in this world, have chiefly in view the promotion of his kingdom. Then shall we be the people that he

23

will delight to honor; and the light of his glorious presence, as we advance on toward a state of greater perfection, should this be our happy lot, will go with us, and be, at this time and in ages to come, our front and rear guard. In which hope I can now bid you an affectionate farewell.

JOHN MOTT.





An epistle to the members of the re
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